

## CLAIMS

1. A method in a wireless handheld communication device for reducing a communication delay at a proximate wireless communication device comprising:  
communicating a first communication on first link to a proximate wireless  
5 communication device; and  
communicating simultaneously with communicating said first communication, a second communication on a second link to a base station, wherein said first communication and said second communication are substantially the same.
- 10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein communicating said second communication further comprises communicating said second communication to a remote device by relaying said second communication through said base station to said remote device.
3. The method of claim 2, further comprising communicating with said remote device  
15 and said proximate wireless communication device simultaneously,  
wherein a first communication delay associated with said first communication to said proximate wireless communication device is less than a second communication delay associated with said second communication to said remote device relayed through said base station.
- 20 4. The method of claim 1, further comprising prior to communicating said first communication to said proximate wireless communication device, receiving from a wireless local area network, a notification that at least one said proximate wireless communication device is currently connected to said wireless local area network.
- 25 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising activating a push-to-talk communication button or a send key prior to the step of communicating said first communication.
6. The method of claim 2, wherein said first link is a direct link to said proximate  
30 wireless communication device for communicating said first communication with a

reduced audio latency relative to said second communication relayed through said base station to said remote device.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising identifying said proximate wireless communication device as a wireless communication device, proximate to said wireless handheld communication device.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein said step of identifying said proximate wireless communication device comprises:

transmitting a proximate device request message; and  
receiving a proximate device response message from said proximate wireless communication device in response to said transmitting said proximate device request message.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein said step of identifying said proximate wireless communication device comprises receiving a proximate device notification message from said base station, said proximate device notification message identifying said proximate wireless communication device, as a wireless communication device, proximate to said wireless handheld communication device.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:

establishing said first link with said proximate wireless communication device identified in said proximate device notification message from said base station,

wherein said first link with said proximate wireless communication device is a direct link between said wireless communication device and said proximate wireless communication device; and

establishing said second link with said remote device through said base station.

11. The method of claim 8, further comprising prior to said step of transmitting said proximate device request message, activating a push-to-talk communication button or a send key.

12. The method of claim 7, wherein said step of identifying said proximate wireless communication device comprises initiating an ad hoc network with at least one proximate wireless communication device.

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13. The method of claim 6, further comprising determining that a communication quality of said first communication on said first link has decreased below a predetermined threshold; and

communicating through said base station with said proximate device in response to  
10 determining said communication quality in said first link has decrease below a predetermined threshold.

14. A method in a wireless communication system comprising:

receiving a first device channel assignment at a first device, said first device  
15 channel assignment comprising a first device uplink channel; and  
informing a second device, proximate to said first device, of said first device channel assignment.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising communicating an audio signal on said  
20 first device uplink channel with a base station.

16. The method of claim 15 further comprising monitoring directly by said second device, said audio signal of said first device on said first device uplink channel.

25 17. The method of claim 16, further comprising:

determining that the quality of said audio signal is below a predetermined threshold;

canceling said monitoring directly said audio signal from said first device; and  
monitoring said audio signal from said base station.

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18. A method in a communication device for reducing the audio latency at a proximate communication device comprising:

transmitting a first communication over a first direct link to a proximate communication device; and

5 transmitting, simultaneously with transmitting said first communication, a second communication to a base station over a second link, different from said first link, wherein said first communication and said second communication are substantially the same.

10 19. A wireless communication device comprising:

a microprocessor;

a transmitter coupled to said microprocessor, said transmitter capable of transmitting on a first link and a second link simultaneously;

15 a proximate device communication module coupled to said microprocessor, said proximate device communication module communicating a first communication on first link to a proximate wireless communication device; and

20 a wide area network communication module coupled to said microprocessor, said wide area network module communicating, simultaneously with communicating said first communication, a second communication on a second link to a base station, wherein said first communication and said second communication are substantially the same.

20. The device of claim 19, wherein said wide area network communication module is configured to communication to a wireless local area network.

25 21. The device of claim 19, wherein said proximate device communication module is configured to communicate over a local area network.